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## **Groundbreaking University Inaugurated on Saudi National Day**

WASHINGTON [September 25, 2009] – On Saudi Arabia's National Day, September 23, the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST) Inauguration Ceremony was celebrated at the 9,000 acre campus along the coast of the Red Sea in Thuwal, Saudi Arabia.

KAUST is an international, graduate-level research university that provides state-of-the-art learning facilities for students and professors from around the world. Its purpose aligns with the vision of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, who imagined a university where scholars would work together to solve the problems facing the world today, while also bridging gaps between cultures.

In his keynote address, King Abdullah said, “Undoubtedly, scientific centers that embrace all peoples are the first line of defense against extremists. And today, this university will become a ‘House of Wisdom’ to all its peers around the world, a beacon of tolerance.”

The inauguration ceremony also featured speeches by the KAUST Chairman of the Board of Trustees and Minister of Petroleum and Mineral Resources, His Excellency Ali Al-Naimi, Minister of Higher Education, His Excellency Dr. Khaled Al-Anqari, and the President of KAUST, Professor Choon Fong Shih.

Minister Al-Naimi highlighted the structure of the admissions process at KAUST in his remarks, stating, “At King Abdullah University of Science and Technology, we have no quota for men or for women. We are out to attract the best minds in the world.” He continued, “This is the House of Wisdom. Here the focus is going to be education and research, nothing else.”

The size and quality of the Saudi education system continues to grow to meet the demands of its growing population and diverse economy. Dr. Al-Anqari noted there are 24 government and eight private universities in the Kingdom today and more than 70,000 students are studying on government scholarships abroad.

Professor Shih said KAUST, “was a gift from King Abdullah to Saudi Arabia and the whole world.”

Also in attendance was Saudi Ambassador to the United States, Adel A. Al-Jubeir, who said, “KAUST is a unique institution that will transform, God willing, higher education

and research in the Kingdom and contribute to applying science to improve life. It is an institution that will be inclusive and that will build bridges among people throughout the world."

Students from the United States make up eight percent of the inaugural class while 14 professors from the United States are faculty members.

The ongoing education initiatives in Saudi Arabia reflect the King's commitment to the continued improvement of the country's education system. In 2009, the Saudi government allocated approximately 25 percent of its budget to education.

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## Saudi King Abdullah Inaugurates New Saudi University for Science and Technology

WASHINGTON [September 25, 2009] – Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz was joined by world leaders and nearly 3,000 guests as he delivered the keynote address to inaugurate the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST).

Other speakers during the ceremony included the KAUST Chairman of the Board of Trustees and Minister of Petroleum and Mineral Resources, His Excellency Ali Al-Naimi, Minister of Higher Education, His Excellency Dr. Khaled Al-Anqari, and the President of KAUST, Professor Choon Fong Shih.

In his remarks, the King spoke about the integral role Islam has played in academic achievement, stating, “Historically, the Islamic civilization has played an enormous role in serving humanity. After God, the great Islamic scholars have contributed to many areas of scholarship, such as the role played by Ibn Al-Nafees in medicine, the impact Jaber bin Hayyan had on chemistry, and Al-Khawarizmi’s pivotal role in algebra. Similarly, the study of sociology benefited immensely from the genius of Ibn Khaldoon.”

King Abdullah closed his remarks with a condemnation of extremist ideologies, saying, “Humanity has been the target of vicious attacks from extremists, who speak the language of hatred, fear dialogue and pursue destruction. We cannot fight them unless we learn to coexist without conflict - with love instead of hatred and with friendship instead of confrontation. Undoubtedly, scientific centers that embrace all peoples are the first line of defense against extremists. And today, this university will become a House of Wisdom to all its peers around the world, a beacon of tolerance.”

For more information on KAUST, please visit their website at [www.kaust.edu.sa](http://www.kaust.edu.sa).

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